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RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 001089

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TAGS: PREL PHUM FUN BU

SUBJECT: BULGARIA NOT IN A POSITION TO OPPOSE INVITATION TO
BURMA'S FOREIGN MINISTER

REF: STATE 124139

Classified By: BRAD FREDEN, A/DCM, FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

1) (C) We delivered reftel to Asya Tsvetanova, MFA's Burma desk officer, on Aug. 3. Tsvetanova said that Bulgaria's pre-accession status in the EU does not give it sufficient leverage to lobby for a reversal of the decision to invite Burma's Foreign Minister to the Sixth Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in Helsinki on September 10-11. She pointed out that Bulgaria shares the EU's concern with the Burmese human rights record -- that is why the collective decision was to invite the FM and not the head of state, as with all other participants. This is in line with the EU common position that Burmese officials could attend multilateral meetings if the meetings are related to human rights, said Tsvetanova.

2) (C) Bulgaria also supports Burmese participation because it assures the summit will take place, according to Tsvetanova. This is particularly important because Bulgaria

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and Romania hope the ASEM members will vote to support the two countries' automatic entry into the organization upon their EU accession. According to Tsvetanova, Bulgaria has worked hard to lobby the ASEM members and hopes its efforts will bear fruit in September.

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